

Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

October 12, 2026

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CREATE
LASTING
IMPACT

Celebrating 104 years of Service

CREATE LASTING IMPACT 2026-2027

President **CHARLIE WEIDANZ** opened the meeting and welcomed Roomers and Zoomers to the October 12, 2026 Rotary meeting.



They look at the sea all day.
As long as it takes to pass, the ship keeps
raising its hull.
The wetter ground, like last, reflects an
ascending goal.
The land needs very warm,
but wherever the truth may be,
the water comes ashore and equally deceive.
They cannot look out for it.
They cannot look indeed.
But when was that ever a water to any watch
they keep?"



ERIC JENSEN introduced Michele from the San Jose Rotary Club and all the guests which were too many to name individually. ERIC then introduced **JACK CABANESS** who provided the Thought of the Day.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

JACK provided a quote from a poem by Robert Frost, not as widely known as The Road Not Taken:

"The people along
the sand all turn
and look one way.
They turn their
back on the land.



PRESIDENTS CLUB

DARYL SAVAGE joined the President's Club in honor of the successful Palo Alto Police Foundation event last Saturday and thanked her team who contributed to the event: **JON GOLDMAN, STEVE EMSLIE, RANDA HOFFMAN**

KAREN ROHDE joined the President's Club in honor of her mother's 100th birthday which she celebrated with many family members in Southern California.

ERIC JENSEN joined also in honor of the Police Foundation event last weekend. ERIC is a Police Department employee and liaison to the foundation.

ULLRICH SCHWERTSCHLAG joined the President's Club to recognize **YUDY DENG**, a candidate for City Council and a Rotarian.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BETSY BECHTEL announced that there will be a bird watching event at the Palo Alto Baylands on Tuesday October 27th.

Bagels and coffee will be available and the cost is \$25 per person. Bird watching starts at 8:45am. Let her or KAREN ROHDE know.

PROGRAM



Program Committee Member, **SALLY TOMLINSON**

introduced the moderator for today's City Council Candidate Forum.

SALLY served as the timekeeper.



Yudy Deng



Brian Hamacheck



GENNADY SHEYNER is a multi-award winning journalist from the Palo Alto Weekly. He asked all the questions, giving equal time to each candidate.

CANDIDATE INTRODUCTIONS



Brynna Chang



Vicky Veenker



Ed Lauing

What is your vision for the city

- Vicky emphasized housing projects like the San Antonio Road Area Plan and climate infrastructure such as grid modernization.
- Ed focused on affordable housing implementation, public safety recruitment, and government transparency.
- Brian highlighted his deep roots in Palo Alto and the need for careful decision-making during periods of change.
- Yudy prioritized efficient decision-making to address housing, traffic, and climate change and her experience on many boards and commissions
- Brynna advocated for increased accountability to residents and addressing infrastructure needs related to 20% housing growth and highlighted her experience on the Planning and Transportation Commission.

Policy Debates

Candidates debated several specific municipal strategies and priorities.

- Regarding a potential vacancy tax, Brian opposed it in favor of investigating why spaces remain empty, while Brynna supported investigating it due to the "contagious" nature of vacancies. Ed suggested it be reserved for chronic cases like those on California Avenue.
- For retail revitalization, Yudy suggested improving permitting efficiency through technology, while Brianna and Ed emphasized streetscape beautification and wayfinding.

Infrastructure and Efficiency

- On municipal fiber expansion, Ed and Brian expressed skepticism regarding competition with AT&T and Comcast, whereas Vicky remained open-minded and wanted to see the results from the pilot project.
- Regarding government efficiency, Yudy proposed breaking down departmental silos, while Vicky suggested using permitting dashboards for transparency.

Youth Well-being

- Candidates discussed mental health support for youth following reports from the Jed Foundation.
- Brynna suggested more community recreational spaces, while Ed highlighted the importance of teen centers and school board collaboration.
- Yudy emphasized the need for community centers like the Cubberley Community Center

Council Performance Reflections

- Incumbents Ed and Vicky stated they do not regret specific votes but noted lessons learned regarding colleague engagement.
- Ed mentioned the challenge of balancing his personal pace with the slower pace of city government operations.
- Non-incumbent Brian suggested submitting the housing element to the state much earlier to avoid builder remedy projects.
- Brynna criticized the timing of SB 79 zoning decisions which affected residents near single-family homes due to a two-week agenda gap.

Municipal Fiber Expansion Debate

- Ed expressed pessimism regarding fiber expansion due to competition with AT&T/Comcast and potential budget impacts.
- Yudy supported the vision but advised against a "blank check," suggesting phases be based on actual construction costs and revenue models.
- Brian argued that since Comcast waylays are already excellent, municipal fiber is unnecessary and likely to fail financially.
- Vicky remains skeptical but open-minded about using public utility structures to provide equitable access without profit motives like PG&E deeslies.

Retail Vitality

Candidates discussed various strategies to invigorate Palo Alto's retail districts including completing the streetscape projects on California and University Avenues, relaxing restrictive zoning measures and working with

property owners to discover ways to incentivize leasing of now vacant buildings.

Government Efficiency

Candidates discussed strategies to improve council decisionmaking and promote better public transparency including re-opening City Hall which was closed during the pandemic. Also discussed was setting better deadlines for staff performance and better communication between various city departments. Speakers also cited better use of technology since cities are generally slow to embrace emerging technology.

Council Priorities

Candidates emphasized reducing greenhouse emissions as a top city priority as well as promoting mental health among the school age population. The City should also be more proactive in promoting EV charging stations since 60% of vehicles purchased in Palo Alto are electric and many don't have access to charging facilities. Candidates also emphasized traffic safety especially near our schools.

Candidate's Closing Statements

Candidates stressed their decision making abilities and their openness to all points of view as well as their backgrounds which prepares them to tackle Palo Alto issues. They also discussed their interpersonal skills that enable them to disagree and remain collegial with their fellow councilmembers.

CLOSING

President **CHARLIE** adjourned the meeting at 1:30 with thanks to the moderator, the candidates and our attentive members and guests.

MEETING VOLUNTEERS

Greeters: Eric Jensen, Karen Rohde

Welcome Desk: Eric Jensen

Hybrid Hosts: Dana Tom

Pinion Writer: Steve Emslie

Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

October 19 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Ray Purpur, Deputy Director of Athletics - Capital Projects The Game is Changing: What's Happening in College Athletics - and Why Stanford Matters
October 26 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Daniel H. Wilson, Author "Hole in the Sky" and the Role of Science and Science Fiction in Understanding our World
November 2 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Jonathan Levin, President, Stanford University A Fireside Chat with the President Hosted by our own Bruce Gee
November 9 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Sunny Dykwel, Garry Lim, Lisa Van Dusen Topic: New Member Talks:
November 16 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	Daniel Fells, NFL Veteran Topic: Recovering from Adversity

